

**LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AGENCY  
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**FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

**LS 6671**

**BILL NUMBER:** SB 176

**NOTE PREPARED:** Dec 27, 2007

**BILL AMENDED:**

**SUBJECT:** Courthouse Preservation Advisory Commission.

**FIRST AUTHOR:** Sen. Merritt

**BILL STATUS:** As Introduced

**FIRST SPONSOR:**

**FUNDS AFFECTED:**    **GENERAL**  
                          **X DEDICATED**  
                          **FEDERAL**

**IMPACT:** State & Local

**Summary of Legislation:** This bill establishes the Courthouse Preservation Advisory Commission. It requires the commission to provide assistance for courthouse-related projects.

The bill also establishes the Courthouse Preservation Fund. The bill requires the commission to submit a report to the Legislative Council. It also repeals and relocates the definition of "division" for purposes of the Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology.

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2008.

**Explanation of State Expenditures:** The commission consists of 12 members, including 4 state employees. Members are not entitled to per diem. However, subject to the availability of money in the Courthouse Preservation Fund, a member is entitled to reimbursement for traveling expenses and other expenses incurred in connection with the member's duties.

Upon the request of county officials, the commission must travel to county courthouses to assess potential courthouse rehabilitation projects and provide technical assistance. Among other provisions, the commission may review and provide recommendations on architectural plans and provide county officials with information concerning funding sources for courthouse preservation projects. The commission must investigate the need for preservation, restoration, and maintenance of historic courthouses as well as study the needs of county officials in planning the restoration, rehabilitation, and maintenance of courthouses. The Commission must submit a report to the Legislative Council before August 1, 2011.

The commission must meet at least four times a year.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) must provide administrative support for the commission. Expenses incurred must be paid from funds in the Courthouse Preservation Fund.

The impact of these provisions will depend on the distance that members must travel in order to attend meetings or visit courthouses, the number of meetings and visitations, and the number and nature of future courthouse rehabilitation projects, as well as whether or not there is money in the Courthouse Preservation Fund.

**Explanation of State Revenues:** The bill establishes the Courthouse Preservation Fund to provide matching grants for courthouse rehabilitation projects and pay for administrative expenses. The fund consists of appropriations, grants, gifts, and donations. The bill does not provide an appropriation. The Treasurer of State must invest money in the fund not currently needed to meet the obligations of the fund in the same manner as other public funds may be invested. Money in the fund at the end of a state fiscal year does not revert to the state General Fund.

The amount of revenue that will be generated for the fund is indeterminable.

**Explanation of Local Expenditures:** The bill could save money for counties if the use of the commission's expertise results in savings on courthouse preservation projects.

**Explanation of Local Revenues:** Counties may be eligible to access funds from the Courthouse Preservation Fund. The amount of revenue that will be granted to local units is indeterminable.

**State Agencies Affected:** DNR

**Local Agencies Affected:** Counties.

**Information Sources:**

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